Exclusion from School: compounding or tackling inequality?

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Aims today

‘Evaluation of Education Provision for Children and Young People Educated Outside the School Setting’

• Contexts: political and policy background in Wales
• Core issues
• Research aims
• Methods
• Draft Findings
• Emerging issues and questions
Context

• Political context
  – Devolution in Wales 1999
  – Labour Government
  – Culture and language

• Policy background
  – Explicit commitment to children’s rights
  – Explicit commitment to raising achievement in education

• Core issues
Wales: Background

• Largely agricultural economy
• Population – 3 million
• Official languages; Welsh, English (around 20% Welsh speakers)
• Highest proportion of UK children living in severe poverty (NAW 2011)
• Higher proportion of 25-64 year olds with low or no qualifications than both the OECD average and the UK overall.
• Mean scores for both reading and mathematics for 15 year olds below the OECD average
• Higher proportion than the OECD average of young people not in education, employment or training.
Political priorities

First Minister: Carwyn Jones. He is a member of Amnesty International, Unison, Unite and the Fabian Society. He has been a Labour Party member since 1987 and played an active role in the 'Yes for Wales' campaign to extend the law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales. He is a fluent Welsh speaker.
Children’s Rights in Wales

• First UK Government to enshrine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in its own legislation
Exclusion: the issues in Wales

• unlawful exclusion
• Disproportionate rates of exclusion for some groups of young people
• an unacceptably wide degree of variation in provision for those excluded from school
• poor educational outcomes
• lack of reintegration into school
• inappropriate use of physical intervention and restraint
Research Aims

• evaluation of the exclusion process
• an evaluation of the delivery, planning and commissioning of education provision for children and young people educated outside of the school setting
• make recommendations for policy development
Methods

• Statistical and policy analysis of publicly available data
• interviews with key informants
• a survey of local authorities
• interviews with children and young people, their families and a range of professionals working to support them in education settings outside mainstream schools.
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants in the Research</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key stakeholders</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local authority personnel</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/carers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals working with children and young people</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>156</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Findings: Exclusion

• Rates of permanent exclusion are decreasing but...
• Illegal exclusion still happening
• Reasons given for exclusion problematic
• Some children missing
• Lack of focus on reintegration
• Some groups excluded more than others
• Parents often felt exclusion process was unfair and complex
Exclusions of 6 days or more by sector, rate per 1000, 2010-11

Exclusions of 6 days or more

- Primary
- Secondary
- Special schools
- PRUs
Reasons for exclusions, percentage, 2010-11

- Assault/violence to staff
- Assault/violence to pupils
- Defiance of rules
- Disruptive behaviour
- Bullying or theft
- Racial or Sexual harassment
- Verbal abuse
- Threatening or dangerous behaviour
- Possession/use of weapon
- Damage to property
- Substance misuse
- Other
- Possession/use of weapon
- Threatening or dangerous behaviour
- Verbal abuse
- Racial or Sexual harassment
- Bullying or theft
- Disruptive behaviour
- Defiance of rules
- Assault/violence to pupils
- Assault/violence to staff

5 days or fewer
6 days or more
Permanent
Findings: Education outside School (EOTAS)

• Nearly 90% of learners in EOTAS have special needs
• Nearly 70% are entitled to free school meals
• 75% of learners in EOTAS are male
• Provision is variable e.g. curriculum, hours per week, opportunities for success, accommodation,
• Most learners and families we spoke to were happy with the placement
• Use of restraint and physical isolation
• Reintegration rates improving
Provision for pupils permanently excluded from school, percentage over time
Discussion

• Improvements happening:
  • Curriculum, focus on achievements, flexibility, communication between schools and local authorities

but issues remain:
  • Disproportionate rates of exclusion
  • Unlawful exclusion
  • Use of restraint, and physical isolation
  • Low levels of achievement
Who gets excluded from school?

- Male
- Living in poverty
- Age 13-15 years
- Looked after by the local authority
- Have special educational needs/additional support needs
- Have family who have experienced more ill health, trauma and bereavement than the norm
- Of African-Caribbean origin
- School-aged mothers
- Have a low level of educational attainment
- Of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage.
Children and Young People
A Framework for Partnership - consultation document

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales
Safe and effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons

Guidance
Guidance document No: 041/2010
Date of issue: October 2010
Finally,

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Thank you

Contact

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References:

Butler, V. (2011) Experiences of illegal school exclusions in Wales: a qualitative study, Cardiff: Barnado’s Cymru
Estyn (2011) Joint Investigation into the handling and management of allegations of professional abuse and the arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in education services in Pembrokeshire County Council, Cardiff: CSSIW